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ABSTRACT

Mass media in the Philippines at present show two seemingly opposite trends: a small but noticeable increase in the number of provincial newspapers, and a reduction in the number of radio stations in certain areas. Two general features of the media situation, the private ownership of the medi. and the need for progressive public service orientation, tend to be in conflict, as media resources are concentrated in large population centers. The Philippine press has always been regarded as part of a greater national aspiration, and under martial law, it is being encouraged to aid rural development in a practical way. Greater professionalism is also being mandated. The following five areas of concern in journalism education and research need to be addressed: the low image of journalism education with academia; the lack of local, relevant, teaching materials; students' ambivalence towards research; the shortage of faculty to teach and conduct research; and the meager resources and facilities for teaching and research. (DF)

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A Look at the Mass Media Situation in the Philippines: Implications for Education and Research

Presented to the Session "Teaching Asian Communications: An Assessment", Association for Education in Journalism Convention, University of Washington, Seattle, August 13-16, 1978.

by

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Media overview

Philippine mass media in terms of its newspapers and radio-television components, is at present showing two seemingly opposite trends of development. For print publications, there is a small but noticeable increase in the number of provincial newspapers in the country. This may be seen particularly in the establishment of newspapers in certain provinces where no press publication was existing before, i.e., Cagayan Valley, Bulacan, Batangas, Oriental Mindoro, Sorsogon, Masbate, Bohol, etc.

On the other hand, for broadcast media, the trend seems to be in the rationalization of the industry. This refers to the reduction in the number of radio stations particularly in areas where over-crowding among several stations had resulted in cut-backs in earning or income. Congested broadcast areas in various parts of the country were identified in a nationwide study conducted by the Broadcast Media Council through Sycip, Gorres and Velayo & Co., an accounting firm, in November 1975. As of this period, the total number of radio stations in the country had been reduced from 297 to 205. Some of the affected areas where reductions have been made were: Laog, Ilocos Norte; Olongapo, Zambales; Metro Manila; Lucena, Quezon; Naga, Camarines Sur; Bacolod, Negros Occidental; Cebu City; Cotabato City, Cotabato; and Davao City in Davao del Sur.

Yet the picture for both print and broadcast media does not appear clearly in these terms nor do these developments tend to be uni-directional. For press publications, it is not all of positive growth considering that there were newspapers in various parts of the country that ceased publication altogether. This had led to a situation where one particular community would not be serviced by any particular local newspaper when it had at least one or more than one before. Publications were reduced in such areas as La Union, Pangasinan, Nueva Ecija, Camarines Sur, Iloilo and Davao del Sur. Some areas where local newspapers have disappeared completely are: Catanduanes, Sulu, Agusan del Sur and South Cotabato.

The reverse is true for broadcast media. While pre-Martial law radio stations have been closed in the major cities or urban centers, new radio stations were granted permits to operate in the less developed areas of the country or where radio stations have not been operating before. Additional stations were opened in La Union, Batangas, Laguna, Antique and Samar. New stations were also inagurated in Occidental Mindoro, Surigao del Sur and South Cotabato. The latter has five radio stations operating at present where none had existed before Martial Law. Metropditan Manila, a heavily congested broadcast area with its 52 radio stations and seven television stations in 1971 is now reduced to a more viable 33 radio stations and five television stations. However, in the area of FM broadcasting, Manila's FM stations have almost doubled in number from six stations in 1974 to 11 FM stations in 1976.

There are two general features which could be cited in the operations of both print and broadcast media in the Philippines today. One is that the mass media are primarily in the hands of the private sector: all major dailies and magazines in the country are owned by private corporations or individuals while in broadcasting, 205 stations are operated by the private sector as against 15 radio stations under government control. The term "industry" could be applied for both media in the sense that they operate in much the same way as private corporations normally should --- the predominant goal is to meet the corporate objective which is for increased earnings or profits.

Another is the fact that the media sector is a heterogenous collection of individuals and groups which implies that decision-making and control is undertaken not by one central media agency but by different individuals and stations competing for audiences and advertising revenue. Whatever supervision and control there is could be viewed in terms of self-regulation and internal discipline among the media practitioners through the Broadcast Media Council (BMC), an organization composed of council members from radio-television owners and personnel, and the Philippine Council for Print Media (PCPM), with council members from the ranks of newspapermen and publishers. The members of the councils are elected for a specific term by members of the print media and broadcasting guilds.

Under the present media set-up, the initial problem that comes to the fore is the question of private pursuit of profit colliding with the media's public service function. In specific terms, the private character of media ownership often leads to lack of initiative and conservatism or conformity to established modes or working

formulas. The over-concentration, for example, of radio stations in the urban centers of the country is due as much to the profit motive as it is to the lack of initiative to venture into the other areas that are equally promising but still need to be tapped. The recent BMC study on gross billings of radio stations in the Philippines showed that the non-traditional broadcast areas are turning up a higher percentage of advertising volume than the traditional areas (Please see Table 1). Thus, a relatively high percentage of growth over the past two years was noted in Isabela, Occidental a nd Oriental Mindoro, Albay, Camarines Norte, Masbate, Sorsogon, Samar, Negros Oriental and others. Perhaps the broadcasters will eventually follow the marketing men to the less developed areas of the country. However, they should have pioneered years ago and established the leadership themselves, rather than let the advertisers set the pace.

As for the print media, there is a very marked dearth of publications particulalrly of information/news format in the country at present. Using as basis the entire output of all press publications in the Philippines and the number of people in the country that has to be reached, both the local and national newspaper can only account for about 10 percent of the total literate population or just about one newspaper copy per issue for every three households in general (Please see Table 2). This is further aggravated by the fact that there are still areas in the country that need to be reached by

the newspaper medium. In Regions X and XI for example, no provincial press can be found in the provinces of Lanao del Sur, Maranaw (created after Martial Law), Bukidnon, Agusan del Sur, Surigao del Norte, Surigao del Sur, Davao Oriental, Davao del Norte, South Cotabato and Sultan Kudarat. Such a situation also exists in the Luzon provinces of Ilocos Sur, Abra, Batanes, Quirino and Bataan. The attempt to transform the Philippine mass media, both print and broadcast, from a highly urbanized or Manila-centered institution into something that would better serve the regional areas or the rural population is a long and difficult process. Two obvious problems could be seen in this respect: One is the problem of resources which a developing nation like the Philippines would have to square with. As an investment or as a development priority, mass communication has still to make its way to the top of the list. There are positive signs that this historical neglect is being corrected by the present government particularly by lifting some taxes on communication equpment and supplies and encouraging loans for communications infrastructure in the rural areas, but this is just beginning and a lot have still to be done from here. The other problem is that of manpower or qualified personnel to fill in the requirements of the present mass media and the media's expansion to the rural areas or other regions of the Philippines. This is a very real problem and one that I would address myself to in the remaining part of this report.

Table 1: Current Status of the Philippine Broadcast Media

	Region I	Region II	Region III	Region IV	Region V	Region VI	Region VII	Region VIII	Region IX	Region X	Region XI	TOTAL
A. Stations before ML	31	10	17	66 8 TV	26 1 TV	32 3 TV	30 4 TV	11	12	30	32	297
B. Stations after ML	21 2 TV	8	10	47 5 TV	14 2 TV	20 3 TV	16 3 TV	7	7 1	22 1	33	205
1. No. of radio sets	323,705	154,148	428,923	973,249	222,432	438,363	202,360	180,279	121,834	351,104		=3,538,794
2. No. of TV sets	29,822	1392	104,410	448,731	7496	27,650	25,302	5383	2740	6962	16,552	= 676,440
3. No. of households	505,417	302,757	686,810	1,616,359	517,691	678,713	582,514	441,439	274,021	370,325 657,880		= 6,633,926
4. Total population	2,727,011	1,555,210	3,713,952	7,878,882	2,966,881	3,618,326	3,032,719	2,381,409 1,869,014	1,952,735	3,686,154		= 35,382,377
5. Radio Gross Billings '75	₱5,922,264	₱1,899,193	₱2,143,363	₱31,559,293	₱3,810,122	₱5,820,738	₱5,178,807 ₱1,492,612	₱1,871,657	₱3,194,583	₱6,785,831		= ₱69,678,463
6. Percentage Growth (1971/1975)	33%	44%	37%	25%	46%	26%	27%	62%	44%	23%	27%	35%

References:

1. Broadcast Media Council: Summary of Annual Radio Gross Billings (1974-1976)
2. National Census and Statistics Office: December 1975
3. Philippine Almanac and Handbook of Facts for 1975

Table 2: Current Status of the Philippine Print Media

	Region I	Region II	Region III	Region IV	Region V	Region VI	Region VII	Region VIII	Region IX	Region X	Region XI	TOTAL
A. Publications pre-ML	10	3	8	15	10	6	4	2	2	5	9	74
B. Publications post-ML	7	8	11	17	11	7	9	2	5	5	5	87 plus 22 magazines
1. Circulation	37,838	16,391	32,700	1,517,070	31,475	22,457	26,242	4000	11,200	6850	13,245	=1,719,468
2. Literacy	1,405,541	792,590	2,150,621	4,688,458	1,596,732	1,683,588	1,661,973	1,246,995	696,766	621,584	922,401	= 17,467,249
3. No. of Households	408,082	247,602	564,400	1,062,611	453,702	485,160	531,338	418,061	240,142	171,911	316,521	= 4,899,530

References: An Annotated Guide to Philippine Serials, University of the Philippines Library, 1976

Philippine Council for Print Media, (PCPM), List of Approved Publications as of December 31, 1975.

The 1974 Asian Press and Media Directory, Press Foundation of Asia.

Philippine Almanac and Handbook of Facts for 1975.

Notes on the table:

1. Publications as used in A and B refer to newspapers.
2. ML is letter designation for Martial Law.
3. Circulation figures include 22 popular or general magazines.

Journalism education

I would like to suggest at this point, a broad and a rather simplistic outline for analyzing the growth of journalism education and of communication research in the Philippines. These stages tend to over-lap each other and as I would point out later, appear to develop certain points of convergence in the present state of Philippine mass communication. The first stage is the rise and maturation of traditional journalism education from the beginning of this century to the 1960's; second, is the start of communication research programs in the late fifties up until the 1970's; third is the proclamation of martial law in the Philippines and its impact on the Philippine mass media; and fourth is the rationalization of the mass communication industry that started in the last five years or so.

Journalism courses were first introduced in the University of the Philippines, a government-supported institution founded during the American colonial rule, in 1919 where it suffered an early death in the hands of an irate colonial legislature. In 1936, the University of Santo Tomas, a Catholic institution ran by the Dominican Order, established a journalism major program within the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters. UST's program today is the oldest surviving journalism curriculum in the country.[1] Other universities followed and journalism programs and/or courses were started in Far Eastern University, Philippine Christian College, Philippine Women's University, Lyceum of the Philippines, St. Theresa's College and St. Paul's College. The University of the Philippines also revived its journalism

program and offered it under the English Department. It was commonly accepted at that time that the main business of journalism education is to turn out better writers, if not newspapermen and this explains its being attached to or linked with the English departments or Arts and Letters divisions in the different universities mentioned here. As a writing-oriented program, it faced strong competition from the relatively more established English studies program in the academe and to a certain degree, from among the newspapers themselves where training in writing, if that is the case, follows one's lifetime attachment to the newspaper organization --- in the latter case, examples of copyboys or stringers fresh from high school and then becoming editors after 20 years or so are not altogether exaggerated. The newspaperman with a journalism degree, much less, a college education, was quite rare during the 1940's and the 1950's. It was only later when Filipinos who have earned their journalism degrees, in the United States primarily, returned and succeded in entering the newspaper field that the school-trained journalist became more felt in the working press. According to Maslog:[2] "The editor of the Manila Times and the managing editor of the Philippines Herald had master's degrees from American schools --- Syracuse and Yale. The editor of the Manila Chronicle had done graduate work in the United States as a Nieman fellow at Harvard." In 1962, the Philippine Press Institute was established with the aim of upgrading the journalism profession in the Philippines. The PPI in part was the result of the collaboration of the newspaper industry, the International Press Institute, UNESCO and the academic sector. It introduced the idea of training seminars for newspapermen with ties to journalism schools in the country and also abroad. In a way, the PPI opened areas for cooperation and acceptance between the practitioner and the academic in the universities. Interchange of people, though

not very frequent, became possible. The Institute of Mass Communication for one, had as faculty or lecturers the editors of the leading dailies then, such as the Manila Times, The Philippine Herald and the Manila Chronicle. At present, journalism courses or programs are to be found in the Greater Manila area and are expanding to the provincial colleges and universities as well. The Manila-based universities are the Univ. of the Philippines, Univ. of Santo Tomas, Lyceum, Univ. of the East, Far Eastern Univ., De La Salle Univ., Phil. Women's Univ., Assumption College, Centro Escolar University and College of the Holy Spirit. In the provincial areas, they are offered at the Univ. of the Philippines in Los Banos, Baguio campus, and Cebu campus; Central Luzon State University in Nueva Ecija, Univ. of San Carlos in Cebu City, Mindanao State Univ. in Marawi City and Xavier Univ. in Cagayan de Oro.

The first "communication" courses in the country were offered in the Univ. of the Philippines College of Agriculture at Los Banos.[3] What actually started this was the growth of agricultural extension activities in the late 1950's in which the problem of introducing new rice farming techniques to farmers was confounded or facilitated by the systematic study of the media of communications and the conditions for the farmers' acceptance of such new ideas.[4] Later on, a program in what has now been called "development communication" was offered in UP Los Banos in both the undergraduate and master of science levels. In 1964, UNESCO proposed the establishment of a regional center in journalism and communication training for the region, which led to the creation of the Institute of Mass Communication in the University of the Philippines, Diliman campus, on August 1966. The IMC offered undergraduate courses in journalism and broadcasting with an MA program in journalism. Three years later, it added MA programs in broad-

casting and communication research. Also in about the same period, Ateneo University, a Catholic university, began offering courses in communication in both the undergraduate and graduate levels. By the 1970's, communication courses and/or programs have sprung up in all the schools that were offering journalism and in time, communication departments and colleges were formed, taking on its wings in many cases, the existing journalism programs; others took in also the speech and drama courses as part of the new communication department, while, in some, a new communication curriculum were offered side-by-side with existing schools of journalism. This was the case, for example, in the Univ. of Santo Tomas and Lyceum of the Philippines. Let me illustrate briefly the tremendous growth in this area: in the Institute of Mass Communication, there were about 20 undergraduates and about 5 graduate students in the sixties when our program started; in 1972, total enrollment was about 190 students; in 1976, the total enrollment reached 410 students with about 120 enrolled in the graduate programs. One possible reason for this growth, I think, is the expansion of new opportunities for students not only in the print media, but more so in broadcasting, advertising, public relations, government information and rural extension. In fact, the "non-traditional" work areas seem to be getting a bigger and bigger share of the enrollment in the communication field. As we have noted in a 1975 report, enrollments in journalism programs in almost all cases have dropped or have remained as is while enrollments in broadcasting, advertising, etc. have steadily increased. Another related factor could be the growing "sophistication" of mass communication activities in the country which is starting to create a demand for people with graduate backgrounds in communication, in particular,

or of communication graduates who are versed in planning, policy-formulation, media management and research. This communication sophistication of sort appears to be steadily on the rise and is related to a point I will suggest later on the rationalization of the mass media industry.

As you all may be aware of at this point, martial law was declared in the Philippines in 1972 and this had substantially changed certain aspects of the mass media in the country. Of these changes, the shift in emphasis or orientation from urban-centered to regional or rural-expansion vis-a-vis mass communication had deeper implications for journalism and communication education. If the journalist would have to grapple with such issues as rice productivity or village self-help projects; or if the communicator would have to talk to the rural populace or to a farmer about health or sanitation --- these would mean that the journalist or communicator would have to change or modify the foci of their work and expand their skills. As a consequence of the government's intensified rural or mass-based programs, there is a great demand for students to work in the provincial areas as journalists, trainors, community workers and researchers. Moreover, the shift to local issues of socio-economic concern had proved the old journalistic formulas as inadequate: it was one thing to show conflict between Mr. Marcos and his opponents and another thing to show conflict between farmer Jose and crop infestation. This rural thrust, if I may repeat, has led to development communication curricula in colleges and universities throughout the country and remains to be, I think, as a major impetus for the future growth of journalism/communication education programs in the Philippines.

Finally, the fourth factor is the "rationalization" of the mass media industry itself in terms of increased efficiency and higher profits. I have stressed the fact that Philippine mass media is generally in private hands and it is this factor of competition, decreasing revenues, loss of markets or readerships, etc., that has driven the media industry to strive for some measure of rationality and effective planning. What seems to be a growing trend is for professional managers to take the leadership in this direction. These professional managers are people with business degrees or management degrees who themselves have an understanding, if not appreciation, of the social sciences and how it can improve their organization. I would say that it is this linkage between these managers of the mass media and the academic community that has shortened the gap between, let's say, the practioners and the academic people. I think, journalism educators or academics have better chances of arguing not that they could write better than the newspapermen but that they could do research, planning, etc. as well that could upgrade or improve the newspaperman's repertoire of skills. The Broadcast Media Council, for one, has approved a licensing requirement to the effect that a radio station should have a percentage of college-trained broadcasters in its staff. It also approved a series of training workshops held last 1976-77 for station managers and personnel in cooperation with schools of communication in the Metro Manila area. As for the print media, some seminars in precision journalism have been started with speakers from the different journalism departments or schools; and some newspapers have conducted readership and circulation studies in the last couple of years. The print media through its publishers guild, the Publisher('s)

Association of the Philippines, Inc., has begun to explore the possibility of a series of workshops or seminars for journalists. A resolution to that effect has been approved in a national convention of the organization last year. The signs are clear enough that such developments in the mass media industry would continue on a long-term basis. Journalism education or communication education has a significant role to play in this and I would think that the gaps between the media practitioner and the academe have been bridged somewhat and what we need now is for the innovative individuals to make the crossing.

Conclusion

Some quarters in refering to the Philippine press almost always decry the "loss of freedom" for journalists and the media in general. I think, however, that such concern should also take note of the fact that under the martial law government, all individuals do sufter from a restriction of certain political rights. Everyone is uneasy about restrictions of any kind and this is also true for Filipinos, many of whom, including Prés. Marcos in his speeches and writings, tend to regard this situation as an interim condition and not as a permanent one. This is to say that journalists or the media is reflective of the general process that the entire nation is undergoing at the present time. The press in the Philippines has always been regarded as part of a greater national aspiration and to a certain extent; many will accept as fairly reasonable a comment made by Teodoro Valencia, a leading columnist, that the press is"eager to improve themselves, willing to share the national responsibility to progress." That rallying cry for economic betterment and social well-being may have been glorified in the Philippine press but then one can never really say that the

issue is overemphasized; can anybody really say that poverty could be glamourized?

What we may see as a possible trend in the future is the convergence of the traditional journalism practicum and the refinements of journalism or communication education. This merging together could be hastened by the growing concern, particularly of government, to reach the masses of the population in both the urban areas and the countrysides. Moreover, the need to create new audiences or increasing media coverage will goad the mass media industry into the professionalization of its ranks and the streamlining of its operations. But these developments will test the ability of journalism or communication education programs to cope with new demands and there are problems that need to be resolved; these are: 1) the low image of journalism education within academia vis-a-vis other fields of study; 2) the lack of local, more relevant teaching materials; 3) the ambivalent attitudes of students toward research; 4) too few trained staff or faculty to teach and do research; 5) meagre resources and facilities for teaching and conducting research.[5] In terms of developing a strong research tradition in this field, one can take note of the fact that many researches that have been done in the Philippines tended to be isolated or singular in focus. What I mean is that even in the simple notion of Lasswell's who says what, to whom, etc., these past communication studies tend to be sender-focused, or directed to the message, or that of the medium or the audience --- but seldom in the combination of any two or of all aspects in a particular study. What this may point to is the need for some synthesis of sorts, or for a more broad perspective on future communication studies done locally.

Speaking on the need for exploring research methodologies and approaches, Dean Feliciano commented on a 1972 paper that "it has proved advantageous to invite students to devise their own approaches whenever possible because research has shown that Western research techniques have many limitations in the Asian setting. The use of attitude scales provides one illustration. Interviewers in some Asian countries have found it more useful to ask open-ended questions to obtain valid responses. They have found that the "indirect" approach and the "tangential" way of asking questions work better in the Asian setting than the rigidly structured scales which force the reluctant village respondents to answer by choosing one of the pre-determined and pre-coded answers of the researcher."[6]

Finally, Everett Rogers, in a recent article, talked about the decline of the dominant paradigm that had ruled the intellectual definitions and discussions of development.[7] The new focus he said is in a participatory process in which people gain greater control of their environment and that self-development as such implies a different role for communication than the usual top-down development approach of the past. What I think is happening now in the Philippines is that we have here numerous cases or hundreds of situations in which the battles, if I may so so, between the traditional development paradigm and alternative approaches are being waged and decided. The Philippines I think, is one country that is heterogenous and diverse enough to defy any generalization --- a single paradigm or approach, new or old, notwithstanding. What this means is that the huge task of social

mobilization and change in the developing areas is more susceptible to innovative and flexible approaches and it is possible that there could be more than one alternative paradigm that may be seen from the experiences of peoples in the developing nations; In short, our possible answer to the social scientist's search for a paradigm or approach, as in the case of Dr. Rogers, is that we should be more open to whatever possibilities there are; and in the Philippine case, it will suggest a somewhat broader perspective, a combination of various approaches to define that elusive problem of communication and human development. As an aside, let me say that those who feel that they should look for things beyond the streetlamp where it's lighted and to explore the dimly-lit corners which may provide more promise --- they may find doing research in the Philippines quite interesting and promising.

1 Crispin Maslog,"Journalism Education in the Philippines" in Journalism Quarterly, Spring 1972,pp. 119-122.

2 Maslog, op. cit., p. 120.

3 Nora C. Quebral, The Making of a Development Communicator, in Juan F. Jamias, ed., Readings in Development Communication, Univ. of the Philippines at Los Banos, Laguna, 1975.

4 Juan F. Jamias, The Philosophy of Development Communication, in Juan F. Jamias, ed., Readings in Development Communication, Univ. of the Philippines at Los Banos, Laguna, 1975.

5 Gloria D. Feliciano,"Problems, Standards and Criteria for the Teaching of Communication Research in Asia" in Philippine Journal of Communications Studies, Vol. II, No. 1,pp. 84-103.

6 Feliciano, op. cit.,p.99.

7 Everret M. Rogers, "Communication and Development: The Passing of the Traditional Paradigm," Communication Research 3, 1976, pp. 213-240.